

**TSONGA / MACHANGANA
HISTORY**

TSONGA HISTORY PERSPECTIVE BY MANDLA MATHEBULA, ROBERT NKUNA, HLENGANI MABASA AND MUKHACANI MALULEKE

[INITIALLY WRITTEN AS A RESPONSE TO THE TSONGA-SHANGAAN KINGSHIP DEBATE]

Early History of Tsonga communities in South East Africa

Archaeological evidence points to a continuous occupation of the area between St Lucia Bay from at least the thirteenth century, probably at 1250. Early Portuguese documents of shipwreck sailors indicate that Tsonga Communities were already based between Maputo and Saint Lucia Bay by 1550. Writings of Perestrello (Santa. Bento-1554), Diogo de Couto (Santa Thome-1589), Lavanha (Santa Alberto-1593) record presence of Ronga chiefdoms between Saint Lucia Bay and the Maputo region in sixteen century. They recorded the names of chiefdoms like Ngomane, Nyaka, Mpfumo, Lebombo (Livombo), Manyisa and Tembe. These names have survived till today. What is significant is that Portuguese documents of the 16th century point to the fact that Tsonga (Ronga) chiefdoms were larger their Nguni counterparts. Actually, Nyaka and Tembe developed powerful kingdoms, the first extending from Delagoa Bay in the north to as far as Saint Lucia Bay in the south and the latter covering the Delagoa Bay region and all land as far as the Lebombo (Livombo) mountains.

By the eighteen century, the Maxabane (Mashabane) (which broke away from the Nyaka chiefdom), , Matsolo and Mabota chiefdoms were added to the chiefdoms observed by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century.

Historically, Tsonga communities stretched from St Lucia Bay in Northern KwaZulu Natal up to the upper Save river in Mozambique, covering parts of Swaziland, Mpumalanga, Kruger National Park and South Eastern Zimbabwe

In the 1720s , Portuguese and Dutch identified the Tsonga as linguistically and culturally belonging to one group despite the fact that they belonged to different chiefdoms. This was motivated by the fact the Ronga themselves identified themselves as one group with people who spoke the same language, regardless of the fact that they belonged to different chiefdoms. Dutch reports mention that there were visitors into the Delagoa Bay area from the interior (probably the Hlanganu) who were identified by the Ronga as speaking the same language as them and that members of the Hlengwe sub-group had the same scarifications as the Ronga. The Dutch stressed that the Ronga recognized the Tonga

of Inhambane and the Chopi as separate from them.

Some Hlengwe oral traditions also claim that the Hlengwe were part of Ronga of Northern KZN and Maputo region of Mozambique. In the late 1600s to mid 1700's there are Portuguese reports about the movement of some Ronga people from the Lourenço Marques region to Inhambane region. These Ronga/Hlengwe communities are reported to have ransacked the Tonga of Inhambane and some Shona communities in the upper Save river. This movement was happening almost simultaneously with the with entering of Sotho-speaking people into the hinterland of Delagoa Bay. The Portuguese of Inhambane knew both the Hlengwe of Chauke (Cawuke) clan and Sono in the early eighteen century.

Henri P Junod , postulated that Tsonga communities could be divided into these dialects:
(a) Hlengwe-mainly found in the upper Limpopo river and Save river in Mozambique and Southern Eastern Zimbabwe. The Hlengwe dialect is a transition between standard Tsonga and Tshwa

(b) Hlanganu- historically found in Swaziland, Mpumalanga Kruger National Park and between Sabie and Nkomati rivers in Mozambique. The Hlanganu dialect is a transition between mainstream Tsonga [based largely on Dzonga] and Ronga.

(c) Dzonga (South)-found between the Sabie and Nkomati rivers

(d) N'walungu (North)- mainly found between Limpopo and the Olifants River in Mozambique

(e) Vatshwa-mainly found in Inhambane in Mozambique

(f) Xika-mainly found in North East Nkomati in Mpumalanga

(g) Ronga (East) - mainly found in the Northern KwaZulu Natal and Maputo region in Mozambique. In KZN there are two Ronga dialects worth mentioning: the Xissonga in the Pongola valley, more especially in the Ndumo area and the Xikonde around the Saint Lucia Bay. These two sub-dialects may be nearer to extinction.

(h) Bila (Vila)-found in Bileni in Mozambique.

These people were so named mainly because of their geographical location and dialects. Though they spoke different dialects, the language and cultural practices were largely the same. Hence they constituted a single cultural and linguistic community. It is for this reason that when one reads Vutlharhi bya Vatsonga (a collection of Tsonga proverbs) by Junod, it is difficult to separate proverbs along the different dialects!!!!

For over centuries Tsonga have assimilated other cultural groups who came to live with

them in the South East Africa region. The following clans are a case in point:

(a) Shona

(i) Tembe-Karanga (Kalanga)- were in Delagoa Bay region by 1554

(ii) Baloyi(Valoyi) -Rozvi (Lozwi) - they were already in the N'walungu region during the time of the Dutch occupation of the Delagoa Bay (1721-31). Some Hlengwe oral traditions claimed that the Hlengwe were actually the ones who converted the Valoyi from Rozvi (Lozwi) into Tsonga in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. This probably happened after the death of the powerful king of Rozvi, Changameri Dombo in 1696.

(b) Shiburi (Xivuri) were Sotho. They entered Mozambique as conquerors from the Mpumalanga lowveld in the 1700s as separate groups, but they organised themselves into a Shiburi (Xivuri) chiefdom.

(c) Manganyi were Nguni who lived in Kwa-Magoda in Kwa-Zulu Natal

(d) Mabunda and Maswanganyi were part of the Mazibuko (Nguni) clan in KwaZulu Natal.

(e) Gaza-Ngoni-Shangaan: several Nguni clans who left with Soshangane to Mozambique from 1821 abandoned their Nguni language and became Tsonga speaking

(f) Chopi- several Chopi people have joined the Maluleke clan.

(g) Ndau- several Ndau clans like Mashaba (Maxava or Machava), Sithole, Moyana, Miyambu, Simango are now part of the Tsonga.

(h) Nkuna- came from Ngome in KZN.

It must be understood that although the Tsonga assimilated foreign cultural elements, it does not follow that the people are merely a hybrid of the assimilated groups mentioned above. In fact, the Tsonga have for centuries been identified as a cultural and linguistic group sufficiently different from other neighbouring cultural groups like the Tonga of Inhambane, The Zulu (Nguni or Ngoni) and the Karanga and the Sotho in South East Africa.

As indicated above the Gaza-Ngoni-Shangaan of Soshangane were not the first Nguni from Zululand (or Kwazulu/Natal) to enter Tsonga dominated Southern Mozambique. There were other groups like the Nkuna (spoke Mbayi) who left Ngome in Northern KwaZulu, (probably during the time of Dingiswayo's rule) for Lydenburg district in Mpumalanga and then Mozambique. In Mozambique they settled among the Rikhotso. They abandoned the Mbayi dialect and adopted Nhlave, a Dzonga sub-dialect. The Manganyi were from Kwa-Magoda. They settled among the Van'walungu and adopted the N'walungu dialect. The Mabunda (Mavundza) and Maswanganyi were part of the Mazibuko clan in KwaZulu. They left for Nhlave area of Southern Mozambique where they adopted the Nhlave sub-dialect of Dzonga. When Soshangane arrived in Mozambique they were already Tsonga speaking ,

which means that they had been there long enough to allow for their Nguni dialect to be swallowed by Tsonga.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE GAZA-NGONI (“Shangaans”)

The Gaza were a junior section (inKohlo branch) of the Ndwandwe. In 1819 when the Ndwandwe were defeated by Shaka Zulu the Gaza were under the leadership of Manukuza (alias Soshangane), who doubled as the chief commander of the Ndwandwe forces defeated by Shaka. The Gaza lived in the Mkuzi area, around the eNtshaneni mountain.. The senior house under Zwide lived in Magudu, near the Pongola valley. The Gaza lived side by side with Ronga [Thonga] communities as the Mkuzi river was a historical boundary between Nguni and Ronga [Thonga] communities. There were also Ronga speaking communities [Xissonga speaking communities] in the Pongola valley, near the area where Zwide was based. This means that when the Gaza arrived in Mozambique between 1820 and 1821 , they had already interacted with Tsonga communities for a very long time. After the defeat of the Ndwandwe in 1819 Zwide moved from Magudu to present day Piet Retief area in Mpumalanga. His new domain apparently included some parts of South West Swaziland. He is believed to have died in 1824.

The Formation of the Gaza Empire

After his defeat by Shaka, Soshangane left with few followers for the eastern Lebombo foothills, till they reached the vicinity of upper Tembe river, where they were met by Captain W. Owen of the British Navy in 1822. Owen claimed that Soshangane’s followers numbered between 200 and 300. About 1825 Soshangane entered the country between Matsolo and Nkomati river where he found Zwangendaba Hlatswayo of the Jele [Jere] clan , a former Ndwandwe subsidiary chief. They briefly formed an alliance. After clashing with Soshangane, Zwangendaba and his followers left for Vendlan, between Limpopo (Vembe) and Levubu (Ribvubye) rivers, where they lived there for a while, before migrating to Rozvilan, near present day Bulawayo. He defeated the Changameri Rozvi. He later left for Manyikalanda in the North east where he met Soshangane again in the 1830’s. He was defeated by Soshangane (some say he fled without a fight) and he crossed the Zambezi for Malawi in 1835.

By 1825 Nxaba Msane, another former Ndwandwe general and subsidiary chief had

entered central Mozambique, in the Sofala province. He ruled Sofala undisturbed for about 10 years, between 1825 and 1835. It was only in 1835 when he was removed by Soshangane. Nxaba left Sofala for Zambia.

After defeating Nxaba, Soshangane lived for a while in Musapa in Zimbabwe, where he conquered the Ndau (Vandau) and Manyika (Vamanyika). Some Gaza Ngoni lived in various Manyika regions in Zimbabwe, like the Zindi, Samanga, Nyamhuka, Karombe and Murahwa. They intermarried with local women.

Between 1838 and 1845 Soshangane brought the whole region between Nkomati and Zambezi rivers under his political control. Although he raided the Lourenço Marques area in the early 1820's, after leaving the Tembe river for Bilene (Bileni) in the Limpopo valley in late 1820's [about 1827], the area did not fall under his sphere of influence. In fact, Dingane's Zulu army, with auxiliaries from Matsolo [Matola] and Maputsu [Maputo] ransacked Lourenço Marques in 1833 and killed the Portuguese governor. After 1838, Zulu influence of the Lourenço Marques had waned. For a large part of Gaza rule in Mozambique, the Lourenço Marques region was regarded as nominally part of Portuguese rule. European visitors to this region in the 1800's claimed that Portuguese control of the Ronga chiefdoms was virtually a theoretical claim rather than a reality. Sometimes Portuguese governors actually paid tribute to Ronga chiefs.

The Nkuna, Valoyi, Mavundza and Rikhotso left for the Transvaal in 1835 after refusing to accompany Soshangane in his pursuit of Zwangendaba. Soshangane's attempt to pursue them became fruitless and ended in 1842 in the battle of Matshengwana.

The Maluleke (or Van'wanati) had long established themselves around the northern part of the present day Kruger National Park and around the confluence of South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In other words, although they were raided by the Gaza and the Ndebele, these groups refused to be subjugated. For over a period of about 150 years to this date, these groups lived outside the Gaza Kingdom, they re-established themselves as independent polities.

Another group of the Tsonga people left with the Portuguese hunter Joao (aka Jiwawa or Juwawa) Albasini to settle in Luonde [Riyondze], near the present day Makhado Town. He established the Spelonken or Xipilongo empire, which was constituted by the "Magwamba" community. For close to two decades, Jiwawa Albasini did not have any

relationship with Soshangane or the Gaza Kingdom until the late 1850's when Soshangane's son, Muzila, fled to Spelonken or Xipilongo in the face of a civil war with his brother Mawewe. Soshangane died in October 1858. After his death a struggle ensued among his sons. Modanise was his eldest son by his first wife, Muzila, by his second wife, and uSihono and Mawewe, by his third wife. The third wife was the 'great wife' as her lobolo was paid by the nation. uSihono, the elder brother of Mawewe, was technically the rightful heir to the throne after Soshangane's death. The Gaza elders (who supported Mawewe) kept Soshangane's death a secret and organized war against Modanise, uSihone, Yopanjwa, Mzila and Mhlabandabuka. Mzila had fled to the Spelonken whilst the other brothers fled north to the vicinity of the Zambezi river where Mawewe's armies followed and killed them all by May 1859, except Mhlabandabuka who managed to cross the Zambezi river into Malawi. Mawewe was left to rule the Gaza empire.

Muzila returned to Mozambique at about November 1861 armed with more support from Jiwawa Albasini, Hosi Magudu Khosa of Khoseni, Hosi Mahuntsi of Makwakwa and the Portuguese of Lourenco Marques, which enabled him to drive Mawewe into Swaziland where some of his descendents live to this day. Muzila ruled the Gaza Kingdom from Musapa (Mustapha or Mussourize), in the Chimanimani mountains in the present-day Zimbabwe for over 20 years.

Muzila's rein continued until August 1884 when he died, leaving his son, Mdungazi, alias Nghunghunyani, to take over. Nghunghunyani moved the capital from Musapa to Mandlhakazi, near Bileni in 1889, to try to reestablish the shaky authority of the Gaza empire over the communities of Limpopo valley, more especially the Vachopi.

Like his father, Nghunghunyani did nothing to re-conquer the Tsonga who had established themselves outside the Gaza Kingdom. In fact, Nghunghunyani only attempted to conquer some Ronga Communities whom his father and grandfather had failed to subjugate during their lifetime. He, too, failed to subjugate them and instead opted to establish some diplomatic relations with some of them. Nghunghunyani ruled his people from his new capital city of Mandlakazi near Xai-Xai (or Ncayi-ncayi).

Bannerman (1978) argues that the relationship between the many Southern Hlengwe chiefs in Zimbabwe and the Gaza kingdom was more complex. He states that rival Hlengwe groups occasionally sought the support of both the Ndebele and the Gaza to settle scores against each other. Xitanga [Chitanga], for instance, sought Ndebele help to

help deal with his rebellious Induna Mpapa. According to Forestall , the Sengwe was the only Southern Hlengwe chiefdom that paid tribute to Muzila, but was also subject to Chikwalakwala. The other groups were occasionally raided by Gaza forces while the Sengwe was spared because of its tribute-paying status. Some Hlengwe chiefs also paid tribute to Boers in the Transvaal. Tribute paying was not always or necessarily an indication of subjugation of a community. It seems like some communities used tribute paying as a tool to retain their autonomy rather than face constant raids by rival powerful groups. This is demonstrated by the paying of tribute to rival powerful rulers as some Hlengwe clans did. Even Soshangane paid the Boers 300 head of cattle as compensation for the attack and defeat he inflicted on them in August 1836 and made himself a nominal tributary.

In 1894, a war broke out between Nghungunyani and the Portuguese settlers in Lourenco Marques - now Maputo - (named after a Ronga King, Maputsu). In the course of the war Nghungunyani was captured in 1895 leading to the royal family abandoning the war for the bush, leaving Magigwana Khosa - the army chief general - fighting with his generals. Magigwana Khosa continued with the fight until 1897 when he was killed by the Portuguese army at a place called Mapulangweni. The royal family abandoned the war at the time when the people needed them to give direction. The core of the royal family located in Bushbuckridge with no attempt to return and reclaim their Kingdom.

In Bushbuckridge, the Nxumalos established their own Amashangane Tribal Authority. (The exact location and the map of this area are explicitly illustrated between page 44 and 45 of Vukosi bya Buyisonto) a copy of the map is attached as Annexure ?.

It is interesting to note that when they arrived in South Africa, no attempts were made to claim the people who were already living this side of the border (the “Magwamba” in the Hlanganani, Giyani, Louis Tritchardt and Malamulele districts; Mavundza in Tzaneen and eastern Giyani districts; Valoyi also in eastern Giyani and Tzaneen districts; the Xika in Komatipoort and Barberton districts; Hoxani and Nhlanganu groups who lived near them in Bushbuckridge; and the Nkuna in the Tzaneen district) or those they have never fought at all (the Thonga or Rhonga-Tembe in northern Natal).

In fact, these people were not involved in the war against the Portuguese as they were not under the command of the Ndwandwe forces. The second group of the Nxumalos, led

by Gija, fled to Xipilongo under a Venda Chief Tshimbupfe Davhana as his ndhuna and he and his people were later removed to Xaswita in Maluleke country (under hosi Xikundu). They did not stay long there as they were expelled from the area by hosi Xikundu when they refused to live by Xikundu's rules on his land and they were settled in Ntlhaveni on land traditionally belonging to other Maluleke clans, but which had been confiscated by the Boers. When they arrived at Davhana's country, they were treated as ordinary people who were running from their own war. No attempts were made by Gija to claim the N'wanati or the nearby "Magwamba" because he recognized their independence. In fact, in a statement Gija gave to the government of the day in 1904, he confirmed most of what is contained in this submission. This was nine years after the defeat of the Nxumalos by the Portuguese and about seven years after the arrival of most of them in the Transvaal territory (The full statement and related handwritten notes are attached as Annexure and ?).

To further show that they accepted that Gaza was a lost case, when Buyisonto, Nghunghunyani's heir, returned from Portugal where he had been held captive with his father, no attempt was made to resurrect the Gaza kingdom. Buyisonto was not welcomed by the "Magwamba" as their King even though he landed in the nearby Louis Tritchadt train station. More information on this is contained in Makamu and Mathebula's books and all the trekkpasses of Buyisonto's trip from Windhoek, via Johannesburg to Louis Tritchadt are attached as Annexure , and ?)

Instead he was linked with the Maxobye people, who were under Gija, who took him to his people in Bushbuckridge. On his way to Bushbuckridge, he traveled past many Tsonga communities who were not even aware of his presence. They included the Nkuna, Valoyi, Rikhotso and Mavundza. During his coronation in about 1922 as the King of the Amashangana, none of the other Tsonga leaders were invited as they were busy with their independent businesses. Not even the nearby Mnisi, Khosa and Hoxani clans attended the coronation, let alone the Ngomane, who were also not very far from the area.

Buyisonto ruled until his death without having claimed to be the King of the South African Tsonga people. Upon his death, he was again replaced by his brother Thulamahashi as regent for the second time. Thulamahashi had earlier took over from his paternal uncle, Mpisana, in 1910 as regent for his brother and relinquished power when Buyisonto came back from captivity. On both occasions that he was a regent, Thulamahashi was never, at any stage, a King of the Tsonga. Since their settlement in South Africa, this group was

ruled by Mpisane, Thulamahashi, Buyisonto, Nghobo, Mafemani, Kheto and Eric (Mpisana II), and of course Gija, Magona and SDW Nxumalo. There is no known record of any of these leaders attempting to re-organise their Kingdom.

A rumour that Thulamahashi (Nghunghunyani's remaining son and regent at the time) was trying to mobilise his people in about 1912 to return to Gaza with him disintegrated when Thulamahashi was made to swear before the Pretoria authorities that the rumour was not true (a full report is attached as Annexure?). But, even if this was true, it is clear that Thulamahashi would not have instructed the N'wanati, Mavundza, Nkuna, "Magwamba", and several Tsonga clans under Venda chiefs to return to Gaza because they were not under his authority. Let alone the Hoxani and Nhlanganu groups who lived near them in Bushbuckridge. Between 1918 and 2005 we count 87 years of lull. Between 1896 and 2006 we count 110 years since the fall of the Gaza Kingdom.

In Xitsonga we have three sayings that are relevant in understanding kingship:

- (a) Vuhosi a byi peli nambu (Kingship does not cross a river [boundary])
- (b) Xisola hosi xi sola xi sukile (a person undermines a king only when he or she has left the king's kingdom).
- (c) Loko mhisi yi pela nambu yi hundzuka mbyana (when a person crosses his/her boundary, he/she becomes a member of the group on the other side of the boundary)

Tsonga communities who fled away from Soshangane and his successors for the former Transvaal should be understood in terms of the first two sayings mentioned above. These communities chose to cross the "river" and subject themselves to Sotho and Venda rule or alternatively maintained their independence. The arrival of the Ndwandwe in the Transvaal must be understood in terms of the third expression.

The history of the Gaza Kingdom, although it is an important part of Tsonga history, it is not the alpha and omega of Tsonga history. Soshangane never founded a so-called Shangaan nation. He merely created a shaky multicultural and multilingual empire which was a conglomeration of groups like Vatsonga, Vachopi, Vatonga, VaSena and Shona groups like Vandau, Vamanyika, Teve and Podza. Soshangane did attempt to impose his language in the royal kraal and the military. Many of the conquered groups who were part of a group known as Mabuyandlela did briefly adopt some Ngoni custom and language (lala)- northern Nguni dialect that sounds like a mixture of Siswati and isiZulu. This dialect is characterized by a Thefuya form of speech, which tends to replace the "L" with

“y’. For instance Nxumalo becomes Nxumayo, Mabulandlela becomes Mabuyandlela

The majority of the people who were outside the military continued to practice their cultures and languages rather than Ngoni custom. The cultures and languages of the conquered groups remained fairly intact today. This is not to say that these conquered groups have not adopted some elements of Ngoni culture, but it is rather to emphasize that they retained their original identities to a level which cannot be confused with Ngoni culture. On the contrary, descendants of Soshangane and his people largely abandoned Ngoni custom and Ngoni-Shangaan language and joined the cultures and languages of the conquered or defeated groups. For example, in Chipinga, Zimbabwe there is a Gaza chieftdom that originates from one of Nghunghunyani’s brothers and its people are Ndauspeaking rather than Ngoni. In South Africa there are several Gaza chieftdoms like Magona (Tsonga speaking) at Malamulele, two Mkhatswa chieftdoms in Barberton (Siswati speaking) and AmaShangane Traditional Authority under Hosi Eric Nxumalo in Bushbackridge (Tsonga speaking).

REFLECTIONS ON HOSI NXUMALO’S CLAIM

THE TSONGA OR SHANGAAN DEBATE

The issue of the identity of our ethnic group is somehow linked to the issue of royalty. While we did not attend to it in great detail in the original submission, Hosi Nxumalo’s submission brought about the need for us to highlight more salient points which will assist the commission in carrying its work:

There is a view that since Soshangane defeated many Tsonga groups, all of us should therefore be called Shangaans. In our assessment we find this to be a retrogressive way of reading history. This is so because when one looks at the situation since about 1858, the Nxumalo’s have been assimilated to the Tsonga and not the other way round. For us, it is like suggesting that because the Shona were once defeated by Mzilikazi then they should be called Ndebeles. Accepting this proposition will create a big problem in South Africa as it would mean the Nxumalo’s themselves, the Hlubi, and others who were defeated by Shaka should be called Zulus.

If we say all communities that ran away from the Nxumalo in the 1800s should be brought

under their control, won't we imply that all those who were defeated by Shaka should return to Zululand, in which case the descendents of Soshangane (especially Hosi Nxumalo and his community) will go back to Zululand? Our submission is that the Shangaan community which has been linguistically and culturally assimilated should, as is the case right now, form a component of the Tsonga and not the other way round. Earlier on we indicated that the Valoyi and others are now called Tsonga's because they have been assimilated over a long period of time. The Nxumalo cannot be an exception.

Hosi Nxumalo's claim

1. Amongst the Machangana people there is a debate going around in respect of the difference between Machangana and Vatsonga and called this a trite argument.
2. A lame attempt to portray Machangana as a different species from the group referred (to) as Vatsonga.
3. This view is neither empirical nor innocent.
4. It is common course that for a very long time, "Xichangana" and "Xitsonga" have been used interchangeably.
5. An attempt to draw a wedge between Machangana and Vatsonga is not only ridiculous, but flies in the face of practice.
6. Xitsonga is synonymous to Xichangani.
7. Talked about the so-called four main regional dialects of Tsonga language:

Bushbuchridge

Ritavi

Groot Spelonken

Mozambican dialect

The Tsonga versus Shangaan issue

We submit that the Gaza remained primarily a raiding empire; unlike the Ndebele state in Zimbabwe which developed into a nation Basically today the Gaza-Nguni-Ndwandwe (so-called Shangaans), just like the Ngoni of Malawi (who did create a Ngoni nation, but are part of Chewa, Nsenga and Tumbuka) refuse to accept the reality that there is no Shangaan nation to talk about, rather the descendents of Soshangane exist today as part

of other cultural and language groups like Vatsonga and EmaSwati in South Africa and Swaziland and Vandau, VaManyika-in Zimbabwe and Mozambique as well as part of other societies like VaSena, Vatonga and Vacopi in Mozambique?

It is also a fallacy that there are only three Tsonga dialects in South Africa and that they are named or categorized as Hosi Nxumalo has pointed out in his submission.

Hosi Nxumalo also alleged that one of the 11 official languages recognized by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) is Shangaan / Tsonga. We submit Annexure?, which is an extract from the Constitution of the Republic of South African, which recognizes our language as Tsonga and not Shangaan/Tsonga. We are therefore submitting that it is not true that our language is Shangaan/Tsonga and Hosi Nxumalo's submission to this effect is incorrect.

Hosi Nxumalo also alleges that the population register recognizes Machangana / Vatsonga, as part of the South African population. We submit Annexure? To prove that the register actually recognizes our ethnic group as Tsonga and not Machangana/Vatsonga. In this instance, Hosi Nxumalo's submission is also incorrect.

Junod H P(1977) in *Matimu ya Vatsonga* and Junod (1905:15), both of which Hosi Nxumalo quoted extensively in his presentation have explained the difference between Tsonga and Shangaan, particularly how Shangaan became commonly used in the Reef and other South African mining areas. We are surprised that Hosi Nxumalo decided to ignore this piece of information from the same sources that he used because they obviously find credible and authentic.

Junod H A (1905:15) states: "Another name, which is much used among white people to designate the Thongas (Tsongas) is the word Shangaan. ...But this term was never accepted by the Ba-Ronga (Varonga), who consider it as an insult. It is applied in Johannesburg roughly to all the East Coast 'boys', even to the Ba-Chopi (Vacopi), who are considered by the Ba-Ronga of Delagoa Bay (Maputo) as much inferior to them. Its adoption would be objectionable on that account".

We therefore submit that:

Hosi— Nxumalo is aware of the difference between Tsonga and Shangaan, but wants to

use the confusion created by colonialism and apartheid to boost his claim. It is our understanding that he thinks by perpetuating this confusion, he will lay a claim on all the Tsonga speaking communities with ease.

Hosi Nxumalo's team is aware of the information we are submitting about the difference between the Tsonga and Shangaan as contained in the sources they used (that we are referring to as well), but decided to ignore the information that they thought may be contrary to their claim.

Hosi Nxumalo's representative has not obeyed the oath he took before the Commission and therefore the Commission must take steps against him.

SOSHANGANE DID NOT CONQUER ALL THE TSONGA COMMUNITIES

Hosi Nxumalo's submission brought about a lot of confusion on three concepts:

Tribute payment - used at the time as a symbol of friendship, diplomatic relations, alliance or subjugation We argue that tribute-paying was not always an acknowledgement of subordination but was one of the strategies used by some societies to create friendship with powerful societies to avoid wars with them, thereby retaining their political, cultural and linguistic autonomy. The concept of tribute-paying as a strategy of retaining autonomy accounts mainly for many claims found in oral traditions of several Tsonga communities, like the Khosa , Southern Hlengwe and other groups that the Gaza claimed to have conquered, whereas they themselves claimed not to been conquered. It is also witnessed but the fact that some Tsonga communities (e.g. some Hlengwe) paid tribute to different powerful groups (Gaza, Ndebele and the Boers) at the same time.

Military defeat - which may mean 'simple' defeat and nothing else unless other processes follow thereafter

→ Subjugation - an act of subjecting groups of people into ones rule

→ Assimilation - an act of absorbing groups of people in terms of language, culture and values

Paramount Chief - the equivalent of king denoting to all monarchs under British rule

Hosi Nxumalo's claim

In 1894 - 5 Nghungunyani accepted two Rhonga chiefs, Mahazule Mabyaya (Mazwaya) and N'wamatibyana Mpfumo as his subjects.

Hosi Nxumalo's claim

At the height of the Gaza power in the 1850s, the direct authority of its rulers extended over the whole of what is today Southern Mozambique, among other areas.

So, if Mahazule and N'wamatibyana only became subject to Nghunghunyani in 1894-5 as Hosi Nxumalo pointed out, the submission that in the 1850s Gaza included the whole of Southern Mozambique cannot be correct.

The fact that Mahazule and N'wamatibyana were not Gaza subjects before 1894-5, makes the submission that in the 1850s Gaza included the whole of southern Mozambique. It also proves incorrect the statement that Soshangane conquered all Tsonga communities, let alone the claim that he defeated all of them.

We want to submit that there were four main kingdoms around the present day Maputo during the time of the Gaza. These were the Mpfumo, Nondwana, Mazwaya (polluted by Portuguese to Mabyaya), and the Maphutha or Tembe. None of these communities were ever conquered by the Gaza. Even the suggestion that the fleeing of the two Rhonga leaders to Gaza in 1894 was a sign of their submission to Nghunghunyani is incorrect.

The truth, therefore, is that Mahazule and N'wamatibyana took refuge in Nghunghunyani's country when they were attacked by the Portuguese as would happen to any leader who is in trouble but has a friend somewhere.

When Phungashe, the chief of the Buthelezi was attacked by Shaka, he fled to Zwide of the Ndwandwe, not to become his subject, but to get protection or asylum.

When Mgubho, the chief of the Xika community was attacked by the Ndwandwe in the 1820s, he fled to Noziyingili of the Tembe in the east, but never became his subject.

We can cite more examples in other societies such as the Ndebele and the Pedi to substantiate on this fact.

It is a fact that Nghunghunyani's part in the Rhonga war was precipitated by his acceptance of Zihlahla and Mahazule as refugees in his country and therefore asylum seekers.

Other historians, whom Hosi Nxumalo refers to as his sources in his claim agree with us in this regard.

Junod 1905: (472 - 473) states that Mahazule and N'wamatibyana had taken refuge in Gaza in July /August 1895.

Junod (1905: 473) states that the ... regiments of Ngungunyana would fraternise with those of Maputsu (N'wamatibyana), with whom they were on good terms.

Junod (1905: 473) says the Rhonga war (only) spread to Ngungunyana country (Gaza).

Junod (1905: 475) states that Maputsu fought Nondwana in 1876. How would this be possible if the two were Gaza subjects?

We also want to dispel the notion that Soshangane interacted with Tsonga communities for a first time when he fled from Shaka. The truth is that the Ndwandwe shared the boundary with the Tembe long before they fled from Shaka. Xikonde (Ronga sub-dialect) was spoken around the Mkuzi river where Soshangane's chiefdom was based. Xisonga (Ronga sub-dialect was spoken in the Pongola valley around where Zwide's capital, Magudu was based.

We therefore submit that:

The Tembe→ arrived in the present day South Africa in the 1400s

The Tembe were neither→ defeated nor conquered by the Gaza

They never paid tribute to the Gaza→

→ They are presently led by Hosi Maputsu II (Mabhudu II), who is a senior traditional leader

In truth, Mpfumu, Nondwana, Mazwaya and Tembe were→ neither defeated nor conquered by the Gaza

Tongaland/ Maputaland in northern KZN, which is occupied by the Tembe, was an independent state which was recognized as such by all the colonial powers of the time. In the late 1800s, that is, during Nghunghunyani's reign, the reigning Queen Zambili Tembe was recognized as the Paramount Chief of Tongaland/ Maputaland.

We therefore submit that:

Tongaland / Maputaland was independent from Mpumali, Gaza, Swazi and Zulu states and was recognized as such by all the colonial powers of the time.

HOSI NXUMALO'S CLAIM OVER EASTERN TRANSVAAL (MPUMALANGA) HAS NO BASIS

Hosi Nxumalo's claim

In the height of the Gaza Kingdom in the 1850's extended to parts of present day Mpumalanga, among other areas.

Hosi Nxumalo did not give the names of the communities he claims in Mpumalanga. However, we assume he refers to the Ngomane community, which currently has three groups: the Lusedlane, Siboshwa and Hoyi.

According to Myburgh, in 1885 Dlavu, the brother to Ntiyi, the then reigning leader of the Ngomane, killed an ostrich and went to do regimental duty at the Swazi king Mbandeni's capital dressed in its skin and feathers. When the king demanded an explanation why tribute had not been paid all along, Dlavu blamed Ntiyi for the omission. Seeing that he had betrayed his brother, Dlavu fled to Gaza. The king of Gaza, Nghunghunyani, sent an expeditionary force in the same year to go and attack Ntiyi's people along Mgwanya River and Ntiyi fled to Mpakeni where he died in 1886. It was during this battle that Ntiyi's heir, Hoyi was captured and sent to Nghunghunyani.

The statement itself tells that prior to this incident, the Ngomana may have paid tribute to the Swazi king.

If the Ngomana were part of Gaza, and tribute payment meant subordination, by going to

the Swazi capital to pay tribute, Dlavu would have betrayed not only his brother, but also the Gaza king for paying tribute to another king.

If Dlavu had betrayed the Gaza king by paying tribute to a rival king, how would he flee to the same king and how would Nghunghunyani protect him and even assist him militarily to attack the very same good servant of Gaza, who did not want to pay tribute to this rival king?

We therefore submit that Nghunghunyani would not have protected Dlavu if the Ngomana, including Dlavu himself, were his subjects and Dlavu had clashed with his brother for betraying him to the king rival to Nghunghunyani. In fact, we believe would have attacked Dlavu, instead.

Nghunghunyani attacked the current Hoyi section of the Ngomana in 1885 and captured the heir to the Ngomane throne, Hoyi, forcing the reigning leader, Ntiyi, to flee to a place called Mpakeni. How would Nghunghunyani attack him if he was his subject?

THE LIMPOPO LOWVELD CLAIM

TZANEEN

Hosi Nxumalo's claim

The area from White River to Tzaneen was not occupied during Soshangane rule. In his oral presentation, Hosi Nxumalo's representative substantiated this claim by saying only insignificant communities and hunting communities occupied this area.

According to Myburgh (1949: 06), in the 1700s, the Xika were an independent community among the Sothos and they lives on Lugogotho mountain in Nsikazi. This area incorporated among others, White River.

Hosi Nxumalo's claim

The western neighbours (of Gaza) were Pedis of Sekhukhuni and Vendas at the time of

Soshangane's reign. Responding to our question during the hearings of the 27th of March 2006, Hosi Nxumalo's representative said 'he did not think about the Lobedu of Modjadji'.

We submitted on that day that we suspect that the Lobedu were deliberately excluded from Hosi Nxumalo's claim because of the role they played in the history of the Tsonga, which gives information contrary to the Nxumalo claim.

We also submitted the following:

That the Nkuna community came to Tzaneen in about 1836 (some say 1834, but there is consensus that it was not later than 1839). They were running away from Soshangane and therefore did not want to be part of his kingdom.

When the Nkuna arrived in the Tzaneen area, they were welcomed by Queen Maale of the Bakgaga community. This community had been living there for many years. They were assisted with settlement land by the Bakgaga, Queen Makaepa of the Banareng and Queen Modjadji of the Lobedu.

Soshangane tried to recapture the Nkuna people on their arrival in Tzaneen in what was known as the Battle of Matshengwana?

In response to our question on 27th March 2006, Hosi Nxumalo's representatives produced a book by Ntsan'wisi and Shiluvana, entitled Muhlaba, which talks about the defeat of Xiluvana of the Nkuna by Soshangane. We also refer the Commission to the same book as it confirms that Xiluvana and the Nkuna fled from Soshangane after the defeat and settled in Tzaneen.

Apart from the Nkuna, there are other Tsonga groups that came to Tzaneen in the 1830s such as the Rikhotso of N'wamungololo, Mavunda or Nhlave of Nyavana and the Valoyi of N'wamitwa, who were also fleeing from Soshangane's rule. Queen Modjadji of the Lobedu played a pivotal role in giving land to these communities in exchange of their military strength, before they acquired their own land in the nearby areas.

We have evidence that when the Rikhotso, Valoyi and Mavunda came to Tzaneen, they became subject to Modjadji, whom they gave military assistance, and who, in turn, gave them land for settlement. One such evidence is a report by the Commissioner of Duiwelskloof dated 1944, which reads

“the present tribe of Mabunda (Mavundza) originated from Nyabana [Nyavana]. Nyabana [Nyavana] was one of Modjadji’s followers in Modjaji’s location. Nyabana had two wives: 1st wife’s son Shihoko [Xihoko] and 2nd wife’s sons Ngobe (Ngove) and Dumeri [Dzumeri]. Shihoko [Xihoko] the elder son and heir to Nyabana (Nyavana) left Modjadji’s location before Nyabana (Nyavana) died to Shirulurulu [Xirulurulu], where he was then appointed by the tribe of Shirulurulu [Xirulurulu] as their Headman and afterwards appointed by the Department. When Nyabana (Nyavana) died, the two brothers Ngobe (Ngove) the elder brother and Dumeri [Dzumeri] the young(er) brother left Modjadji’s location to the unsurveyed land, where Ngobe (Ngove) became the leader of the tribe”.

It is clear that the Nkuna later established their own Kingdom in Tzaneen. Our evidence shows that the Nkuna had their own army that was independent from that of the Gaza and it was commanded by Nyavele wa ka Rikhotso and later by Mankelu wa Xiluvana. The Nkuna could not have had their independent army if they were part of Gaza.

This army had no relationship with the Gaza army that was commanded by Magigwani during the final years of the Gaza. The Nkuna army also did not participate in Gaza’s wars with the Portuguese or any other group that the Gaza army fought against after the Nkuna arrived in the Transvaal. In the Ntsan’wisi and Shiluvana book, you find the names of Nkuna regiments, all of whom were never part of the Gaza army.

In Tzaneen, the Nkuna fought many battles in which Soshangane’s army generals had no role at all. We therefore submit that it was not going to be possible for a subordinate chief to give military assistance to another kingdom without consent from his/her overlord (king). And we also submit that the Nkuna, Valoyi, Rikhotso and Mavunda gave Modjadji and Maake this assistance without Gaza’s consent and the Gaza kings did nothing about that.

We also want to submit that the Gaza kings knew about Modjadji and other Sotho leaders, apart from Sekhukhune and that they gave them the necessary recognition.

So, we submit that Modjadji’s kingdom was in existence during Soshangane and was

known to Gaza. Soon after Mawewe ascended the Gaza throne, there was drought in Gaza in the years 1860/1. It was believed that the drought was as a result of the gods who were angry that Mawewe had murdered his brothers, whom he thought would make his rule difficult. Mawewe was forced to seek help from Modjadji.

“Mawewe, desperaat, stuur ‘n gesantskap na die reenkoningin, Modjadji, om help (Das Nerves 1879:100).

““MAGWAMBA”” / ALBASINI TERRITORY

Hosi Nxumalo’s claim

During the Mzila - Mawewe war, Mzila “moved” to Groot Spelonken, (because) at the height of Gaza’s power in 1850s, the direct authority of its rulers extended over the whole of Limpopo Province Lowveld (and) Mzila regarded Groot Spelonken to be part of Gaza. (Where he prepared for war).

We are not aware of any example any where in the history of African polity, where a leader ‘moved’ and settled on another part of the same country and prepared for war against the leader of the same country.

Hosi Nxumalo’s claim

Joao Albasini was “pushed by the spirit of exploitation” and his (Albasini’s) motives were clear and included, among others, destabilizing of life and kingdoms.

Albasini collected destitute and quizzical black refugees around him for maximum exploitation by:

Ploughing his fields→

Looking after livestock→

Hunting for him,→ and

Cleaning of his castle and looking after pets.→

This part of Hosi Nxumalo's submission is very contradictory to itself. First, it criticizes Albasini as an exploitative colonialist. Secondly, it claims Muzila 'moved' from Musapa and settled in Groot Spelonken (Xipilongo), which he perceived to be falling under Gaza. Thirdly, it claims Muzila was allocated the most fertile land (there) by Albasini. Fourthly, it denied that Muzila was a refugee in Spelonken and claims he (Muzila) directed Albasini to assist him to dislodge Mawewe. Fifthly, it claims only people who ate from his hand glorified him. Sixthly, it claims there were those who believed he was an emperor. Lastly, it says Albasini turned sell-outs and collaborators into headmen.

We want to first submit that Muzila fled from Gaza to Xipilongo and settled there knowing pretty well that the area was not part of Gaza. The fact that Hosi Nxumalo admits that when he got to Xipilongo, Muzila was allocated land by Albasini, a non-resident of Gaza is enough proof for that. The fact that he was fleeing from Gaza to that area is further proof for that.

(De Waal 1953:20) states: "Muzila wat reeds in 1859 deur Mawewe verslaan is en uit Gazaland gevlug het, het hom sedertdien by Albasini in die Transvaal gevestig".

Grandjean 1899:82 states: "Muzila, met soos baie ander vlugteling kapteins voor hom, met groot verlies van aantal onderdane, meide en kinders, as 'n verarmde na die Transvaal toe uitgekyk en by Albasini gaan beskerming soek. Hier is hy gul ontvang aangesien sy teenwoordigheid nie net die prestige van Albasini verhoog het nie, maar ook die troepe van laasgenoemde aansienlik versterk het"

Grandjean (1899:82) states: "Hier is hy gul ontvang aangesien sy teenwoordigheid nie net die prestige van Albasini verhoog het nie, maar ook die troepe van laasgenoemde aansienlik versterk het"

From Musapa, where Mzila was staying, to Groot Speloken, Mzila left behind Tsonga chiefs in the N'wanati and Valoyi areas in the Lowveld, and chose Albasini instead.

Suppose they were fearing that the N'wanati and Valoyi areas were closer to Mawewe than Albasini's place, how about the option of going to Xiluvane in Tzaneen or any of the areas Hosi Nxumalo claims were part of the Gaza kingdom, in Bushbuckridge or Mpumalanga?

In his presentation entitled “Historical Background of the Gaza-Ndwandwe Nxumalo Royal House 10/03/2006 pp.29-30”, Hosi Nxumalo refers to an unpublished book, entitled Albasini dated 1988. The book was written by Joao Albasini III, a grandson to Joao Albasini. We trust that Hosi Nxumalo regards this book credible, hence his reference to it. This book has some few points worth bringing to the attention of the Commission:

1. Joao Albasini was the Paramount Chief of the “Magwamba” tribe (pp. 4)
2. Joao Albasini had an army that was led by N’wamanungu wa N’wamavungu of the Siweya clan (pp. 9)

Ntsan’wisi and Shiluvane, also state that Muzila was part of Albasini and the Schoemansdal army that attacked Xiluvana and the Nkuna army in 1859. Hosi Nxumalo himself agrees with all historians that Muzila was assisted by Albasini and the Portuguese in defeating and dislodging Mawewe. If Hosi Nxumalo maintains that those who worked with Albasini were sell-outs and collaborators, this should be said about Muzila’s relationship with Albasini:

Muzila→ became a collaborator when he fled to Albasini and established a strong relationship with him in 1859

Muzila became a sell-out by collaborating→ with Albasini and the Schoemansdal Boers to attack Xiluvana and the Nkuna in 1859

Muzila intensified his collaboration with Albasini when he sold-out→ Mawewe when he attacked and dislodged him from his throne with the help of Albasini and the Portuguese of Lourenco Marques in 1861

If other leaders→ are said to have been exploited by Albasini, Muzila too, should have been suffered from the same fate of exploitation

So, the big question is: “What→ did Muzila and Albasini benefit from each other and who suffered in the process?”

THE VAN’WANATI CLAIM

We dispute that the land of the Van’wanati or the Van’wanati people belonged to the Gaza. We submit that the Van’wanati inhabited the land they currently occupy in about

1640 (more than a century and half before the rise of Soshangane) when they migrated with the Valoyi from Mashonaland (now Zimbabwe). Since then, they have been ruled by Malenga, Maxakadzi, Guyu, Dlamani (who massacred the infamous Van Rensberg party in 1836), Nkuri, Mhinga, Sundhuza I, Nkhavi, Maxawu, Sundhuza II, Xilungwa and others whose descendents are currently based in South Africa and Mozambique. Although they were occasionally raided by the Gaza and the Ndebele of Mzilikazi, they were never subjugated but remained culturally, linguistically and politically independent from both the two groups.

BUSHBUCKRIDGE

The Tsonga communities who inhabited the Bushbuckridge area were mainly the Vanhlanganu (Mnisi and Khosa) and the Hoxani branch of the Nkuna. When Mpisana and other senior members of the Ndwandwe Royal families and some subjects migrated to Bushbuckridge after the defeat and capture of Nghunghunyani in 1895, Magwagwaza ruled the Mnisi, Njonjela ruled the Khosa while N'wambatini ruled the Hoxani. These communities were independent from each other and also independent from the Gaza. To show that they were indeed independent from the Gaza, Mpisana did not even bother to contact these leaders on his arrival.

Under normal circumstances, it was expected that Mpisana would have done one or more of the following:

Send messengers→ to alert the three leaders that he (Mpisana) and the Royal Family were coming to the area and to arrange for them to meet their 'Prince Regent' and Nghunghunyani's queens. When Hoyi of the Vaxika was released from captivity by Nghunghunyani in 1890, he was welcomed by three of his subject chiefs, Didimba, Maphehlukhuni and Mjokane and an army of the Vaxika.

Make the three chiefs→ arrange some regiments to escort him and the Royal family to safety

Make→ the three chiefs contribute land for the settlement of the Ndwandwe Royal family and the people who accompanied them

Assemble the army from all the Tsonga→ chiefs in the Transvaal to go and assist Magigwani, who was still fighting the Portuguese

Instead, Mpisana never even contacted the three leaders, let alone those who were based

in the Zoutpansberg district and other areas. Instead, he contacted Abel Erasmus, the Native Commission for the Eastern Transvaal with the aim of acquiring land from him.

Hosi Nxumalo's claim

Mpisani led the remnants of the Ndwandwe royal house to their "new home" (and) ruled without clearly knowing his status.

In response to our question on 27th March 2006, Hosi Nxumalo's representative denied that Mpisana met with Abel Erasmus upon his arrival in the Transvaal and maintained that Mpisana occupied the Bushbuckridge land on his own accord because he understood the land to belong to the Gaza and therefore to the Ndwandwe.

We submit that Hosi Nxumalo's representative deliberately told lies to the Commission and therefore submit the following as evidence that he (Mpisana) approached Erasmus for land as a refugee in the area:

The University of South Africa, in a document entitled *Die Hierkoms en Woongebied van die Suidelike Changana*, states: "Mpisane stuur twee gesante nl. Matsavana (Matlhavana) and Maswamene (Maswameni) met geskenke na die Transvaal om geskikte woonplek te vind terwyl hy sy gevolg versamel en in 'n westelike rigting oor die Lebomboberge versit".

Stevenson-Hamilton (1949:204) states: "Die destydse verkornet van die Z.A.R, belas met die administrasie van die Transvaalse laeveld, Abel Erasmus, kon nie opgespoor word nie. Aangesien die gebied tussen die Lebombo en Drakensberge bykans totaal onbewoon was en die kaptein van die Pulanastam (Oos-Sotho) in die omgewing van Mabulaneni (Mapulaneng) (huidige Bosbokranddistrik) geen beswaar teen sodanige vestiging langs sy gebied gehad het nie, keer die gesante terug waar hul Mpisane, tesame met al die oorblywende vroue en kinders van Nghunghunyani en 'n gevolg van 'n paar honderd Changana, reeds in aantog vind."

Stevenson-Hamilton (1949:206) further states: "Tydens 1898 vertrek Mpisane met 'n geskenk (informante beweer diamante en olifanttande) na Abel Erasmus, waar hul versoek om bewoning van die Laeveld, toegestaan word."

Unisa continues to state: “In hierdie gebied het die Changana nou rustig ... met die Swazistamme aan hul suide, Oos-Sothostamme (Pai, Pulana en Kutswe) ten weste en Hlanganu, noord sowel as oos van hulle gewoon.”

A Report of the Natives Land Commission, 1916, Vol.II, pp.389 states: “About 400 families of Tshangaans came into the (Sabie) district in 1906 from the Portuguese side. The chiefs could not afford to buy land, not tribally even. They came here practically naked”

File N.A. 727/1906 Nr. 3664/06 dated 17-08-1906 states: “That he (Mpisane) was in the position of being a refugee in this colony... and that kindness was extended to him by the late government in that Abel Erasmus, the late Native Commissioner, Lydenburg,allowed (to) remain in that district and take up occupation.”

Hosi Nxumalo’s claim

After the defeat of Nghunghunyani in 1895, none of his descendents were recognized as king (and) Paul Kruger and (others) accorded the Ndwandwe leaders the status of chief.

We would have liked Hosi Nxumalo to specify his family’s interaction with the Tsonga chiefs and their communities that were in the Transvaal and clarify the influence his ancestors had to these groups even though they were not recognised as kings. The reality is that they still could have had some influence to these communities even if the government was not according them the status of king, which would mainly be on paper.

Just to give the example of the Zulus, whom Hosi Nxumalo used comparatively to the Shangaans:

“...Shepstone’s ideas of “government tribes” could be fairly readily implemented (but) this proved not to be the case north of Thukela river where the Zulu population had a recent history of centralized rule, focused on the Zulu royal house, and of independence (Cope 1993:2)”.

“After 1925, Solomon’s multifaceted role as Zulu king thus represented a more powerful and pervasive presence in Zulu speaking society (Cope 1993:139)”

During the First World, Buyisonto, Nghunghunyani's heir was enlisted by the Portuguese to fight, first in Europe and later in Africa. When he was in Angola, he deflected to the British and crossed to South West Africa (Namibia). The Namibian authorities helped him link up with the Commissioner of Louis Tritchard, who arranged his reunion with Mpisana in Bushbuckridge.

Buyisonto was scheduled to live Windhoek for Johannesburg's Park Station, where he was to be met by a representative of the Swiss Mission Church in Elim, Hakamela Tlakula. When Buyisonto arrived in the Lousi Tritchardt area, he was introduced to his relatives, Gija and the Maxobye family. None of the other Tsonga chiefs were informed of Buyisonto's arrival in 1922.

From Louis Tritchardt, he was escorted by Gija and the Maxobye family to Mpisana in Bushbuckridge. Along the way, he passed a number of Tsonga communities, including the Nkuna, without notice. On his arrival in bushbuckridge, he found his younger brother, Thulamahaxi, reigning as prince regent.

Mpisana instructed that Thulamahaxi relinquishes the throne to Buyisonto and a coronation ceremony was held at Mpisana's palace. No Tsonga traditional leader was invited in that ceremony and two significant things happened:

First, Buyisonto formally announced the death of his father, — Nghunghunyani, in exiled prison of Azores. He instructed every member of the community to participate in an extensive mourning ritual. None of communities outside the Amashangana Tribal Authority participated in that ritual

— Secondly, Buyisonto decreed a raiding war against the nearby Pulana community. One of the reasons for that war was to collect cattle to beef up the stock that was there. According to Buyisonto's biographer, "Buyisonto remarked that the Ndwandwe had left their cattle in Gaza". None of other Tsonga chiefs contributed regiments to this war.

When Mpisane settled in the Bushbuckridge area after the demise of the Gaza empire, there was another group of the Ndwandwe led by Gija, a member of the Ndwandwe Royal Family that fled via Man'ombe and settled on land belonging to Khosi Davhana of the Venda.

We stated during question time on 27th March 2006 that Man'ombe is the area in which Giyani town has been built. We also stated that in passing through this area, Gija and his people passed through the Chavalalas, Nhlaves, Valoyis, Cawukes, the Van'wanati and other communities that they currently claim as their subjects and proceeded to the "Magwamba" community, but settled on land belonging to the Venda.

In his response, Hosi Nxumalo's representative said that was understandable as in a war situation, people run to the safest destination and even forget their allies along the way. But it would be interesting to see how Hosi Nxumalo would respond to these questions:

Were the communities Gija passed along the way aware of his fleeing through their areas?

What support did these communities give to him and his people?

If they were the Gaza subjects, weren't they expected to escort the Royal members to safety and provide food and other necessary logistics?

If Davhana's country was safe, wasn't the Riyondze capital of the "Magwamba" even safer?

How about the Tzaneen destination and other areas that were far from Gaza or where they were coming from?

Apart from these unanswered questions, we wish Hosi Nxumalo could explain the following:

Why was he and his people expelled from Davhana's country, forcing them to settle at Xaswita, the land belonging to the Van'wanati chief called Xikundu?

Why did Hosi Xikundu also expel them from his land and how would that be possible if indeed Hosi Xikundu was their subject?

We know for sure that even Gija himself did not regard the nearby Tsonga communities as the subjects of Gaza. We have evidence that shows that he actually recognized Mpisana and his people as the only group linked to his.

In a statement to the white authorities dated 15th January 1904 and attached as Annexure?, these are some of the statements Gija said:

"....I have come to Johannesburg to see my fellow tribesmen, with the object of collecting money for purpose of buying food."

“I know Mpisana who is in charge of Gungunyana’s people in the Lydenburg District. We fled from the Portuguese after the capture of Gungunyana. The larger number of the refugees went into the Lydenburg District, with gungunyana’s son, Thulilamashi, and the chief wife, Sonile, and other wives of Gungunyana. I fled by another route towards Madzimangombe, in the Spelonken District, where I have lived ever since with my following.”

“I cannot state the number of souls who are with me in Spelonken, but there are not very many.”

OTHER PERTINENT ISSUES RAISED BY HOSI NXUMALO

We have already highlighted most of the inconsistencies, inaccuracies, contradictions and fallacies raised by Hosi Nxumalo in his submission to the Commission.

He says Jacques and Junod correctly see— Machangana as Vatsonga, citing the titles of their books as “Swivongo swa Machangana (Vatsonga)” and “Vultharhi bya Vatsonga (Machangana)” (and) that only people with an agenda will find fault with this view. Hosi Nxumalo must read more about the works of these authors, including the many articles that they have written about the Tsonga in order to understand the context in which they were writing and their own personal understanding of the Tsonga and Shangaans. He will realize that the very same authors had a dilemma and pointed out in some of their works that they were writing for white man’s understanding. These authors were aware of the fact that Vatsonga were ethnologically different from Ngoni-Shangaan group of Soshangane. However, they had a dilemma that the name Shangaan was popularized in South African mines by white employers as representing people who were ethnologically Tsonga. In order not to confuse many whites who were more familiar with the name “Shangaan”, the authors tended to either write Tsonga-Shangaan as a double-barrel name or alternatively write Tsonga and Shangaan in brackets. H A Junod did allude to the fact that many Tsongas rejected the Shangaan label at the turn of 20th century.

H P Junod (1977) in *Matimu ya Vatsonga* addresses the issue of the name of the language directly:

Kambe loko Vatsonga va vulavula hi ririmi ra vona, swa twala leswaku a va vulavuli ririmi ra Sochangana, xi nga Xingoni[Xichangana], va vulavula Xitsonga; tibuku hinkwato ta hina

i ta Xitsonga. Vatukulu va Sochangana, Muzila na Nghunyanyana, va hundzukile Vatsonga, va vulavula Xitsonga. (p.52)

[When Vatsonga speak it is very clear that they do not speak Ngoni [Shangaan] the language of Soshangane, but they speak Xitsonga. Descendents of Soshangane, Muzila and Nghunghuyani have been assimilated into the Vatsonga group and are Xitsonga speaking]

Historically, Xitsonga is— a language spoken by a very small and insignificant language group in Mozambique. Their language is unlike the Xitsonga used in written orthography within the Republic of South Africa.

Hosi Nxumalo confuses the Tonga— language of Inhambane (Nyembane) with Tsonga and therefore this statement must be ignored by the Commission. Further entertainment of this statement will perpetuate the confusion that was created by colonial writers, which we are currently working hard to correct. In Mozambican Tsonga is divided into three branches which are treated as almost separate languages :

(a) Xirhonga is found predominatly in the South Eastern region, South of the Nkomati river.

(b) Xitshwa-found predominatly south of the Great Save river more especially in the Inhambane (Nyembane) province

(c) Xitsonga proper-found predominantly in the central and North Eastern reaches of the Southern parts of the country, mainly the Gaza province. This branch was historically subdivided into Hlengwe, N'walungu, Dzonga and Bila. The Dzonga dialect formed the basis of the South African standard Tsonga, the language has some elements of the other dialects here and there. In Mozambique, Xitsonga proper has been mislabeled Xichangana. Our document demonstrates throughout that this is a mistake because this language is not Nguni and is not even nearer to be a Nguni dialect. The confusion is perhaps caused by the fact that the some people conflate the Gaza province as a colonial and post-colonial district and the Gaza empire which used to incorporate both Manica, Sofala and Inhambane provinces.

It is a bit strange that people of Manica province would be prepared to call the people of Gaza province Shangaans although they are not Ngoni-Shangaan speaking but Tsonga speaking, whereas the capital of the Gaza empire was based in Manica (a predominatly Ndaou and Manyika speaking areas) for over 20 years, and they themselves are not

prepared to call their languages Nda and Manyika Shangaan.

In the same vein, the people of Sofala province (who are Nda speaking), more especially the Cheringoma area (between Beira and the Zambezi river) which was ruled in 1888 by the family of Singuimene (Sohomene), who was one of the widows of Soshangane are not prepared to call their Nda Shangaan.

It must be noted that Xitshwa and Xironga are not significantly represented in South Africa to constitute separate languages. We merely have some Ronga dialects like Xissonga in Ndumo KZN and Xikonde in Saint Lucia Bay in KZN that may be nearer to extinction.

Any attempt to separate Xitsonga from Xichangana is a hodge-podge of untruths and half-truths and a misrepresentation of facts. This is the pain the Ndwandwe will have to live with for the sake of our nation.

Other cultural features of the Machangana include religious beliefs, marriage patterns, burial rites, food and facial beautification. We need a lot of time on this.

Those who are possessed (by ancestral spirits) carry two spirits within them, viz a Ngoni and Ndawu ancestral spirits. The presence of Ngoni and Nda spirits among Tsonga speaking people merely indicates a history of interaction between Vatsonga and the two groups, not that the two groups are one and the same with Vatsonga. Actually, when these spirits possess someone, they do indicate that they were friends of the forefathers of the person they are possessing and that they are coming to get shelter (and protect the person) from the person. The Tsonga-speaking person who is possessed by either Ngoni or Nda spirits or both, tend to be also possessed by Vatsende spirits which spoke Tsonga. When one compares the Ngoni language used by Ngoni spirits and Tsonga language used by Vatsende spirits, one gets a clear evidence that Tsonga and Ngoni (Shangaan) have historically been separate languages.

The drawing of the border between the Portuguese and Z.A.R in 1891 was neither negotiated with the rightful authorities nor recognized by (them).

There was no SA, Mozambique and KNP

Due to the destabilizing effect of the 1895 colonial war against the Portuguese the Shangaans succumbed to the effect of divide and rule (and) the Boers refused to recognize them as one kingdom.

(The erection of Nghunghunyani's statue) by the Limpopo Provincial Government is the

recognition of the statue and international significance of the Soshangana dynasty (and) confirms that the democratic government of RSA is at pains to restore its subjects' heritage. To argue that Tsonga traditional leaders in Bushbuckridge, Tzaneen, Phalaborwa and Giyani objected strongly last year when the Limpopo government erected this R250000-00 statue is misleading. An estimated crowd of over 30000 descended to bless the occasion.

In the heat of divide and rule, which culminated in the policy of apartheid, the descendents of Soshangana's subjects confirmed their loyalty to their kingdom by naming their Territorial Authority the Amashangana Territorial Authority.

When in 1969, the homeland system granted some form of self-rule, even those who collaborated with the apartheid regime could not resist naming their territory "Gazankulu" (Greater Gaza) in memory of the Gaza Empire of old. This point was legalized by Gazankulu Homeland Act of 1973.

The naming of a Tsonga homeland as Gazankulu was never a reconstitution of the old Gaza empire in South African soil. This is evidenced by the fact the Nxumalo Royal family who participated in the formation of this homeland was never given the kingship of the homeland. As a political compromise, the leadership of this homeland did present the people of the homeland as Vatsonga-Machangana, because they wanted to accommodate into the homeland people who were Tsonga speaking but had pride in calling themselves Shangaans because their Ngoni-Shangaan origins. The Shangaan name here was merely accepted as an ethnic label not a linguistic one. This is evidenced by the fact that in all Gazankulu and South African schools the language that was taught was never called Shangaan but Xitsonga. Even the radio station for Vatsonga was called Radio Tsonga not Tsonga- Shangaan or Shangaan.

The inhabitants of the area being claimed are all Shangaans, but the written form of their language is commonly called Xitsonga. Whether you say Mutsonga or Muchangana, you are therefore referring to the descendents of Soshangana by birth, acculturation or conquest.

In their public speeches, both former President Mandela and President Mbeki, never forget to acknowledge the significant role played by Nghunghunyani and other traditional rulers. This recognition is a further justification for this claim.

There is no other traditional leader in South Africa, who can submit a case stronger than this one with a view to claim the throne of the kingdom of the people referred to as Machangana. No other king ruled over the territory claimed in its entirety.

The Traditional Leadership and Governance Act does not force any traditional community to have a king at all cost.

The Shangaan/Vatsonga chiefs and tribes are not properly coordinated and do not have a common focus and approach in the preservation of their culture and heritage. Unity can only be engendered by strong credible leadership (which) Eric Nxumalo aims at promoting once on the throne.

This argument seems to imply that when people do not have one king they are automatically politically backward. We have shown in this document that Vatsonga have been historically a decentralized society with cultural and linguistic unity. A kingship in itself would not necessarily promote nation building as Hosi Mpisane claims. There could be other forums that Vatsonga could have to promote cultural and linguistic unity, rather than insist on political unity at all cost.

There are those who hope against hope that it may be their opportunity to snatch the kingship of their tribal clusters, however small.

The electronic and print media have been identified as useful means to garner public opinion for or against other potential claimants (of the Tsonga kingship).

If the Ndwandwe family is viewed as unsuitable claimants to the throne of the Machangana kingship, which family then is suitable? Who else has submitted a claim in this regard?

The Traditional Leadership and Governance Act does not force any traditional community to have a king at all cost. Vatsonga have a right if they so wish to organize their society in line with the boundaries of a decentralized society which existed prior to Soshangane's adventures?

(African -American historian) Joseph E. Harris (1972) in *Africans and Their History*, deals with the issue of decentralized societies as those although with shared cultures, traditions and customs, did not have a single traditional leader, yet they lived in harmony with each other

The arrival of Soshangane cannot be seen as the only term of reference that the Tsonga should look into when they revisit their memory of the past? The existence of strong Tsonga communities in South East Africa as part of a decentralized society three hundred years before Soshangane was even born is proof enough that he never founded them?

No credible— Muchangana should hold the view that all other Black communities are deserving of monarchies, but that the Machangana will do with tribal chiefs forever. As Vatsonga we would prefer to do things because they have intrinsic value and can contribute positively to our lives rather than that other traditional communities are doing them.

Hosi SDW Nxumalo performed the coronation— ceremony in the installation of Hosi Majeje in recognition of his status as a Nxumalo.

IMPLICATIONS IN REGARD TO PROVISIONS OF THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK ACT AND THE MANDATE OF THE COMMISSION

TERRITORIAL IMPLICATIONS

We submit that the issue that we are presenting to the Commission has profound legal implications as the ground for the Nxumalo claim is based on events that took place in Mozambique. In 1963 the OAU (now AU) took a decision to accept the colonial boundaries (see attached declaration marked Annexure?). This means that today each government on the continent has a responsibility to redress events that took place within its borders. As there was never a Nxumalo King of the Tsonga people in South Africa, there is no need for this issue to be entertained for that matter. [The capital cities of the Nxumalo Kingdom were based in Musapa, Chayimithi, Bileni and Mandlhakazi in Mozambique]. The Nxumalos did, however, have a kingdom among the Nguni in the northern Natal, which disintegrated with the defeat of Zwide to whom Soshangane was subject and commander of the army. The collapse of this kingdom was reaffirmed by the appointment of

Mankulumani, Zwide's grandson, as the traditional prime minister of Zulu king Dinizulu.

A CASE FOR A TSONGA KING?

In our reading of the Act, we understand that the restoration of Kingdoms is not an electioneering issue where people canvass to be voted, hence we do not think that there is anyone who qualifies as a king of all the Tsonga. However, individual communities, including the Nxumalo, should have a right to make claims that specifically affect them and not to generalize on behalf of all the Tsonga people. We do not believe for once that the Tsonga should have one King simply because there are ethnic groups that have theirs. We also do not support the distortion of Tsonga history in the name of what Hosi Nxumalo refers to as nation-building.

Since Nxumalo's forefathers failed to culturally and linguistically subjugate Vatsonga, what guarantee do we have that if he as a Mungoni-Shangaan (or his descendants) that if given the Tsonga kingship he will not annihilate Tsonga cultural institutions, like Vukhomba, Musevetho, Ngoma and others which have historically not been part of the Gaza-Nguni cultural set-up? The bottom line is that Tsonga communities would prefer to have cultural and linguistic autonomy which would allow us to transform them without being commanded by somebody like Hosi Nxumalo who has very little, if any, regard for our history and heritage.

Since the contact between Gaza and Tsonga communities outside the Mabuyundlela was sporadic and superficial, by awarding Nxumalo the kingship of Vatsonga, the commission will be giving Nxumalo the powers that his forefathers did not have

AFRICAN RENAISSANCE CHALLENGES

Hosi Nxumalo claims the restoration of the Soshangana kingdom is also given impetus by President Thabo Mbeki's call for the revitalization of the African Renaissance. While we think that there is a relationship between the restoration of the pride and value of traditional leadership and the vision of the African Renaissance, we should stay clear of tendencies which have potential to further divide Africans. The rejuvenation of this important institution should enable rather than disable the unity of the people. In other words, African Renaissance should be developmental in that it should not be limited to

political institutions, but should include the relentless engagement with African knowledge in all areas of human endeavours, be it science or astronomy, etc. Until the institutions of traditional leadership engage with the aforementioned challenges, their value will continue to be challenged even if they are recognized by government.

Whereas the outcome of the Renaissance will depend on our dexterity to discern the past and present fabrications, restoring the memory of Africa to its place must go beyond the reach of contemporary exigencies. At best, this is the essence of decolonization. We should not be silent when Africans are as guilty of deconolising themselves by colonizing their brothers and sisters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We therefore recommend the following to the Commission:

That the Tsonga community should be recognized as one♣ ethnic group without a single King;

Different communities should be♣ recognized separately with their individual traditional leaders at whatever level as the Commission may decide based on presentations from the different communities;

The claim by Eric Nxumalo to be the king of all the Tsonga♣ people should be dismissed/ rejected by the Commission

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Posted by TSONGA HISTORY BLOG at [2:11 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

TSONGA HISTORY DISCOURSE

Welcome to the Tsonga History discussion blog, a simple platform for researching the history of the Tsonga people as part of efforts to rediscover the true history of Africa's people. We have to do this as a necessity to understand what the past was, in order to shape a future that is totally free of colonial distortions, a future whose tenure will mark the total freedom of Africa's people from the yoke of neo-colonialism.

Please feel free to contribute your thoughts, or whatever information that will help this blog achieve its mission. To kickstart the discussion on the history of the Tsonga people, we start with the publication of a document on the issue of Tsonga kingship, which is an abridged version of a submission to the Nhlapo Commission, opposing the claim by Eric Nxumalo that he be enthroned as a King of the Tsonga (and Shangaan people).

Given the complexity of the debate and the issues at hand, we think that this blog will allow us to have a responsible debate, with everyone exercising their rights to make their views known. We are of the view that there is no need for current generations to settle the unfinished business of yesteryear; rather our challenge is to engage in a collective journey to locate our distant past in order to build a shared, prosperous future.

Participants are encouraged to be responsible by exercising the necessary restraint, avoiding at all costs the use of offensive language. It is possible to grow from our current differences around the current efforts to resurrect the 18th century Gaza Kingdom.